

February 19, 2013

JOINT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS TESTIMONY

Re: Proposed Bill No. 648 – AN ACT CONCERNING AN APPROPRIATION FOR VICTORY GARDENS IN NEWINGTON

Senator Slossberg, Senator Doyle, Representative Nafis, Representative Guerrero, Representative Lopes, Representative Lesser and other distinguished committee members. I want to thank you for this opportunity to address Proposed Bill No. 648. I urge you to pass this important legislation.

My name is Rosemary Leitz. I am Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Chrysalis Center, Inc. in Hartford. Chrysalis is the agency that has been selected to provide case management services, including employment and family services at Victory Gardens. Chrysalis was selected for its proven ability to provide exceptional case management services to individuals and families in our communities.

The Chrysalis philosophy is to support those in need with a hand up, not a hand out. To help those who are homeless secure safe, affordable housing. To help those in need of employment find a meaningful job. To help those with addiction issues to recover and live healthy, productive lives. To help those who are hungry address the issues surrounding their food insecurity and, with the help of outstanding case management services, open up a new world of health through access to fresh fruits and vegetables introduced to them, sometimes for the first time, at the Freshplace food pantry.

Chrysalis has a proven model of providing such case management services for those in supportive housing for over 18 years. Chrysalis is well-positioned to serve our Veterans in need of these services. There is a tremendous need in the Veteran population for access to secure affordable housing and quality social services. They have been underserved for too long. Having the housing aspect of Victory Gardens moving forward is a wonderful thing. However, we need to serve the whole person. We need to send the message that case management services are essential, and that they will be readily available and easily accessible to our Veterans and their families at Victory Gardens. This helps to remove the stigma that has existed for too long. I am particularly impressed and pleased that Victory Gardens will be a place for families. Imagine the benefits to young families in addressing issues when they are young. This is an investment in their future and ours because seeing our Veterans and their families thrive benefits us all.

We need to show our Veterans and their families how much we care; that we will be there for them in their time of need. But to do that, we need to take action. Chrysalis stands ready and able to provide these essential services to our heroes. Please pass this Proposed Bill No. 648.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and your commitment to the health and welfare of our courageous Veterans and their families.